

Bonn's Need to Overhaul Secret Services Accented

By J. Emlyn Williams

Central European Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

Bonn, Germany

The disappearance of Dr. Otto John, president of the federal Office for Protection of the Constitution, into the Soviet sector of Berlin July 20 has resulted in at least one advance—general agreement that various secret information services throughout West Germany must be overhauled and as far as possible coordinated.

Three developments are considered essential following deliberations of the Parliamentary Committee on the Constitution and of representatives of states. There must be far greater control by Parliament of such activities, coordination of the present federal and state (LAND) information services, and careful scrutiny of existing personnel in these services.

Establishment of one over-all organization to include sections dealing with both protection of the Constitution on the civilian side and with military information services appeals to some political parties. This would result ultimately in concentration of tremendous power in the federal chancellery—which already is believed too powerful for the good of democracy here.

Amalgamation Slated

In practice, it would amalgamate the organization over which Dr. John presided, the secret service branch of the department in charge of preparations for rearming, as well as the intelligence section under former Gen. Reinhard Gehlen all together.

This idea has been discussed for a long time past inside the federal chancellery and implied dismissal of Dr. John sooner or later.

In other political groups, including Social Democratic opposition, it is felt that the best interests of the country and democracy will be served by separating civilian and military sections. This issue must be decided after more deliberations of the Parliamentary Committee on the Constitution.

Motives Still Hazy

Meanwhile, concerning Dr. John and reasons for his disappearance, there is no more clarity concerning motives than a week ago. Dr. John spoke for

the second time over the Communist radio July 28. But his two-minute speech contained the usual anti-American, pro-reunification sentiments which have been heard from East Germany for months past. There seems no doubt it was his voice, but there was no information concerning his whereabouts on the other side of the Iron Curtain.

Federal government attempts, through Minister of the Interior Dr. Gerhard Schröder, to defend the theory that Dr. John crossed into East Berlin under duress have been flatly rejected by most Germans. This theory, according to one editorial, was "simply contemptuous of the facts" and left many with the idea the government wanted "less to exonerate Dr. John than to free itself from responsibility in this affair."

To earlier arguments that Dr. John went because of a sense of frustration in his job, of fear of early dismissal, and because of his strong feelings about former Nazis in office, there now are added others.

Outstanding among these is the view that Dr. John had some sense of a mission that he could help, from East Berlin, far better toward reunification of his country. If so, then this is as naïve and unprofitable as Rudolf Hess's flight to Scotland during World War II.

But until today no concrete proof is available whether Dr. John acted primarily from absurd foolishness or fear or extreme vanity resulting from inverted idealism.